

VZCZCXRO5268
PP RUEHDT RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHPB
DE RUEHHM #1497/01 3620952
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 280952Z DEC 06
FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1929
INFO RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 1413
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0016
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0020
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 0123
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY 0025
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0016
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME PRIORITY 0004
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 0032
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHPH/CDC CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEFAFM/DIRAFMIC FT DETRICK MD
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 2088

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HO CHI MINH CITY 001497

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR, OES/STC, OES/IHA, MED
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH
STATE PASS TO HHS/OGHA (WSTIEGER, EELVANDER AND ABHAT)
USDA PASS TO APHIS
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (LSTERN)
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID (JMACARTHUR AND MBRADY)
ROME FOR FAO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [SOCI](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: ADDITIONAL POULTRY FLOCKS INFECTED IN
SOUTHERN VIETNAM

REF: A) HCMC 1413 B) HANOI 2803 AND PREVIOUS

HO CHI MIN 00001497 001.2 OF 002

1. (SBU) Summary: Animal Health Authorities have confirmed that Avian Influenza (AI) has been detected in additional poultry flocks in southern Vietnam's Ca Mau province. This comes only days after 6,000 birds, mostly ducks, died from AI in Ca Mau and neighboring Bac Lieu Province (Ref A). GVN officials, including Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, are unanimous in their commitment to try and limit the scope of this outbreak. Authorities in HCMC have also stepped up their surveillance of poultry entering the city, even going so far as to request the stockpiling of medicine to treat any human AI cases resulting from this outbreak. End Summary.

2. (U) The Bird Flu Steering Committee of Ca Mau Province reported to HCMC media that AI outbreaks have been reported in two more of the province's communes. The virus, originally detected only in Tran Van Tho District, has reportedly spread to two additional poultry flocks in neighboring Ca Mau City and U Minh Districts. By the evening of December 27, animal health authorities had sent 14 samples for testing, 12 of which had tested positive for AI. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) reports that in total, AI has been detected in six communes of four districts in Ca Mau and Bac Lieu provinces. Nine thousand birds have either died from the virus or have been culled as a precautionary measure. To date, no further outbreaks of AI have been reported in Bac Lieu province.

¶3. (U) Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung has ordered authorities in all provinces to strengthen surveillance of poultry farms in order to ensure early detection of future outbreaks. The Prime Minister ordered the immediate vaccination of poultry in high-risk areas and urged increased monitoring of the sale, slaughter, and transportation of poultry. Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Sinh Hung and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat, in separate visits to Ca Mau and Bac Lieu provinces, were critical of provincial leadership for allowing the outbreak to go unreported for so long. Minister Phat, echoing the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, ordered the culling of all poultry in close proximity to the infected communes, the disinfection of the surrounding area, and the tightening of rules surrounding the transportation of poultry products.

¶4. (U) HCMC Director of Animal Health Huynh Huu Loi reported to local media that authorities at quarantine checkpoints outside HCMC have been ordered to strengthen surveillance of poultry entering the city. In addition, the HCMC People's Committee has instructed district governments to implement anti-bird flu measures, including increased inspections of breeding farms and markets. Animal health authorities will focus on surveillance of live poultry sellers in District 8, Go Vap and Tan Binh Districts, and the area around Tham Luong Bridge. The HCMC People's Committee warned that district authorities would be held responsible for the sale of illegally hatched and traded birds in their districts. (Note: The infected birds in Ca Mau and Bac Lieu were hatched illegally in violation of a GVN decree against hatching ducklings. End Note.) The HCMC Department of Health has also been ordered to prepare drug stockpiles in case of AI infection among humans.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: it is not surprising that additional outbreaks have been reported in Ca Mau province, due to the fact that carcasses from the initial outbreak were dumped into rivers and

HO CHI MIN 00001497 002.2 OF 002

irrigation canals in an attempt by farmers to hide the deaths of the illegally hatched poultry. While the GVN continues to hold provincial leaders directly responsible for unreported outbreaks, HCMC leaders have gone one step further, transferring responsibility directly to district authorities. This approach was first implemented in HCMC last year and was probably key to the success of the city and, subsequently, the entire Mekong Delta in stopping last year's outbreaks. End Comment.
WINNICK